



# Independent Living Centers Program

*The Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission contracts with eleven agencies known as Independent Living Centers (ILCs) throughout the state. These agencies receive both Federal and State funding because they comply with the Standards and Assurances set forth in Title VII of the federal Rehabilitation Act. Among these are the requirements that at least 51% of the board and staff of an ILC are persons with disabilities, and that the ILC is designed and operated within local communities. ILC's also may get funding through a variety of other sources, such as other state agencies, grants, the United Way or charitable foundations. ILC's serve people of all ages regardless of the type of disability. In this regard, they are unique.*

## What is Independent Living?

Independent living is having control over one's life. This means being able to choose and control the decisions and directions for one's life to the fullest extent of one's capabilities. People with disabilities have been historically denied the right and opportunity to make their own decisions. Independent living is also a philosophy which advocates for the availability of a range of services and options which maximize self-reliance and self-determination in all of life's activities.

## What is an Independent Living Center?

ILCs provide the following services that assist individuals with disabilities to achieve their self-identified goals.

Peer Counseling – the opportunity to tap the experience of other people with disabilities who have successfully strived to lead productive and meaningful lives in their communities through a peer role modeling approach. Peer counseling issues include: personal growth, problem solving, socializing or issues faced specifically by persons with disabilities.

Skills Training – the acquisition of skills needed for living independently, such as how to find housing, Personal Care Attendant management, budgeting, self-advocacy or managing entitlements or benefits.

Information and Referral – providing information and referrals related to disability such as where to look for accessible housing, adaptive equipment, medical providers, legal assistance and a large number of other programs and resources.

Advocacy – helping persons with disabilities to know and assert their rights with, for example, the health care system, landlords, accessing financial benefits and in the community in general.

There is no cost for these services.

## Community Services

In addition to individual services, ILCs provide services to the communities in their service areas. Such services might include community access monitoring, consultation on the Americans with Disabilities Act including transitional plans for cities and towns, outreach to under-served populations with disabilities, and training to other service providers and systemic advocacy on a national, state or community level to make the environment more accessible to people with disabilities.

Because ILC's bring together people with all types of disabilities (or cross-disabilities), their advocacy and community service efforts can often be more powerful than those of various groups working alone. ILC's know that regardless of the type of disability, individuals experience many of the same problems and barriers to independence. Thus, common bonds and strength in combining forces are emphasized, while still recognizing that each person has specific and unique needs and goals. Consumer involvement is an important aspect of an ILC. There are many opportunities for people with disabilities, particularly those who receive or have received services from an ILC, to participate in advocacy efforts, serve on the Board or its committees, volunteer or perhaps become employed at the Center.

Centers for independent living have served as a strong consumer voice on a wide range of national, state and local issues. They work to assure physical and programmatic access to housing, employment, transportation, town or city buildings and services, voting, recreational facilities, and health and social services. They have been instrumental in the development of personal care services, and have worked to reduce physical and programmatic barriers in a number of Massachusetts communities. Additionally, a particular ILC may provide other services such as a Personal Care Assistance (PCA) program, computer training, etc.

The ILCs are required to provide services in accordance with the State Plan developed every three years by the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and available on the SILC web site at [www.masilc.org](http://www.masilc.org).

### **What Services are NOT Provided by an Independent Living Center?**

\*An ILC is not a place to live. Consumers will be provided with a list of available housing and taught where and how to locate housing.

\*An ILC does not provide services that the individual with a disability does not want, even if another family member or professional recommends them. Rather, the pros and cons of such services may be discussed. The choice is that of the consumer.

\*An ILC does not 'manage' aspects of the life of a person with a disability on an ongoing basis. For example, ILC staff will not manage a consumer's money, monitor the upkeep of their home on an ongoing basis or provide a PCA. Rather, again, the emphasis is on teaching the consumer to do these things independently or making referrals to, and advocating for, such necessary services.

For further information, contact the ILC in your area, or:

Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission  
27 Wormwood St.  
Boston, MA 02210  
Karen Langley  
Director of IL Services and Rehab Technology  
(617) 204-3623 [karen.langley@mrc.state.ma.us](mailto:karen.langley@mrc.state.ma.us)

Susan Landy  
Independent Living Program Coordinator  
(617) 204-3743 [susan.landy@mrc.state.ma.us](mailto:susan.landy@mrc.state.ma.us)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (*ADA*) prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in employment and public services provided by government agencies. If consumers or employees of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission believe they have been discriminated against on the basis of disability, they should contact the Commission's Civil Rights Officer: Albert Jones, Jr., 27 Wormwood Street, Suite 600, Boston, MA 02210-1616, Telephone 617-204-3762 (*Voice*), 1-800-245-6543 (*TTY*).

## Massachusetts Independent Living Centers Program

Ad-Lib, Inc.  
215 North Street  
Pittsfield, MA 01201  
(413) 442-7047  
TTY (413) 442-7158  
Fax: (413) 443-4338  
[www.adlib.net](http://www.adlib.net)

Boston Center for Independent Living  
95 Berkeley Street, Suite 206  
Boston, MA 02116  
(617) 338-6665  
TTY (617) 338-6662  
Fax: (617) 338-6661  
[www.bostoncil.org](http://www.bostoncil.org)

Center for Living and Working  
67 Millbrook Street  
Worcester, MA 01608  
(508) 363-1226 voice/TTY  
Fax: (508) 363-1254  
[www.centerlw.org](http://www.centerlw.org)

Cape Organization for  
the Rights of the Disabled  
1019 Iyanough Road, #4  
Hyannis, MA 02601  
(508) 775-8300 voice/TTY  
Fax: (508) 775-7022  
[www.cordonline.org](http://www.cordonline.org)

Independence Associates  
10 Oak Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Taunton, MA 02780  
(508) 880-5325 voice/TTY  
Fax: (508) 880-6311  
[www.iacil.org](http://www.iacil.org)

Independent Living Center  
of the North Shore and Cape Ann  
27 Congress Street, Suite 107  
Salem, MA 01970  
(978) 741-0077 voice/TTY  
Fax: (978) 741-1133  
[www.ilcnsca.org](http://www.ilcnsca.org)

Metro West Center for Independent Living  
280 Irving Street  
Framingham, MA 01702  
(508) 875-7853 voice/TTY  
Fax: (508) 875-8359  
[www.mwcil.org](http://www.mwcil.org)

Northeast Independent Living Program  
20 Ballard Road  
Lawrence, MA 01843  
(987) 687-4288 voice/TTY  
Fax: (987) 689-4488  
[www.nilp.org](http://www.nilp.org)

Southeast Center for Independent Living  
Merrill Building, 66 Troy St.  
Fall River, MA 02721  
(508) 679-9210 voice/TTY  
Fax: (508) 677-2377  
[www.secil.org](http://www.secil.org)

Stavros Center for Independent Living, Inc.  
691 South East Street  
Amherst, MA 01002  
(413) 256-0473 voice/TTY  
Fax: (413) 256-0190  
[www.stavros.org](http://www.stavros.org)

### Independent Living Project

ABCD Independent Living Project  
Dorchester Neighborhood Service Ctr.  
110 Claybourne Street  
Dorchester, MA 02124  
(617) 288-9431  
Fax: (617) 265-2597  
[kjohnson@bostonabcd.org](mailto:kjohnson@bostonabcd.org)